Traditions of Wellesley

1875-1916

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Compiled and edited by the Executive Board of the Wellesley College Alumnae Association,

1914-1916

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Greeting!

This Tradition Book has been compiled by the Executive Board of the Alumnae Association, serving from 1914 to 1916, with a view to establishing a record of the origin and development of College customs and traditions. There have been many records from which material has been drawn. The Legendas of 1898, 1906 and 1908 have accounts of the various festival days, and histories of certain college organizations. The News and Magazine have published from time to time short descriptions of by-gone Tree Days, and Floats, and the Historical Committee of the Alumnae Association has preserved a splendid collection of original documents, such as programs and back files of college publications, which contain a great deal of valuable and interesting material. This book has tried to bring together, from all these sources, as much information as possible concerning the ceremonies and customs of undergraduate life. To the authors of the Legendas, the editors of the Magazines, and above all to the officers of the Library, and to the Historical Committee, the thanks of the editor are due, and are hereby gratefully rendered.

An attempt has also been made to supplement these general accounts by personal reminiscences. In the accounts of Tree Day, Float and May Day, and the organization of Student Government, such material has been most happily obtained. But there is yet need for stories of other Wellesley Days. If, by organizing the material

already collected, and by summing up the various phases of college life, the way is opened for criticism, and amplification, this book will have served its purpose. Any alumna, former student, or friend who sees these pages, and who can add to our treasure trove will render the Alumnae Association a great service by sending her contribution to the Chairman of the Historical Committee at the College.

The Executive Board sends this book out in the hope that it will be a pioneer in the cherishing of Wellesley Traditions.

The Corner Stone

First of all Wellesley ceremonies was the laying of the corner stone of the Main Building on September 14, 1871. The account of that day, and of a subsequent one when it was recalled to Wellesley memories, is quoted here from the Wellesley Magazine for February 1915, because it seems such a fitting opening for this book, which seeks to link the present Wellesley with the past.

"On Friday, December 18, 1914, in the Christmas vacation, the workmen digging among the ruins at the northwest corner of College Hall, under the dining-room, uncovered a precious stone in the foundations. Word was sent to President Pendleton, and at one o'clock in the afternoon a little group of college people who had not yet scattered for the holidays, gathered about the place where forty-three years before, on the afternoon of Thursday, September 14, 1871, Mrs. Durant had laid the corner-stone of the College.

Only Mr. and Mrs. Durant and the workmen, and the Wellesley squirrels, saw the stone laid, on that long past autumn day, and the ceremonial was of the simplest. Each workman was given a Bible in memory of the occasion, and a Bible was set in a hollow in the stone. That Bible was the clue to the treasure.

The stone which the workmen had found was hollow, and in its square hole was a tin box. The eager spectators who peered down from the ragged low walls into the

foundations, knew that the Bible must be in the box,—and yet, was it? Mrs. Durant, who could have reassured them, was not strong enough to brave the winter cold; but Miss Fannie Massie, her cousin, a former student at the College, lifted the little box out of the stone at President Pendleton's request, and gave it into President Pendleton's hands. It was firmly soldered and for fully ten minutes resisted stubbornly the efforts to open it, but at last the ends were turned back, and the gilt edges of the Bible were revealed, as bright as the day when they were covered in so close, forty-three years ago. The Book was bound in brown leather, tooled in gold, and the purple book-mark, like the gilt edges, was still bright. The purple ink of Mrs. Durant's hand-writing on the fly-leaves was also unfaded.

As on that earlier day, there was no formal ceremony, but President Pendleton read aloud to the reverent listeners the inscription in the Bible:

"This building is humbly dedicated to our Heavenly Father with the hope and prayer that He may always be first in everything in this institution; that His word may be faithfully taught here; and that He will use it as a means of leading precious souls to the Lord Jesus Christ."

There followed two passages from the Scriptures, also in Mrs. Durant's hand-writing:

"Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the king-

dom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all.

"Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all.

"Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.

"But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee.

"For we are strangers before thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and there is none abiding.

"O Lord our God, all this store that we have prepared to build thee an house for thine holy name cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own." II Chronicles, 29: 11-16.

"Except the Lord built the house, they labour in vain that build it." Psalm 127:1.

This was all. There were no signatures in the Bible, no names to indicate by whom the building was dedicated.

When Wellesley is ready to lay the foundations of her new buildings, the old stone with the Bible in it will be built into the new walls."

Tree Day

The origin of Tree Day takes us back to the early days of the College, when there were only two well established classes, and a host of preparatory students, to make up what is now termed "the undergraduate body." Accounts of Tree Day's beginning, dwell with affection on the fact that it was Mr. Durant's own idea, conceived through his enthusiasm and sympathy with the ideals of College life.

An "old alumnae," (so *she* says) writes reminiscently of "a certain springtide evening, in the year '77, the fragrance of the early season stealing in through the open windows,—for we had evening chapel then,—when Mr. Durant, who had conducted the service, asked the Sophomores and Freshmen to remain after the others were dismissed."

Two rare evergreens had been sent to Mr. Durant by Mr. Hunnewell, and the Founder, "as ever eager to share his treasures with our girls, thought the gift would be suitably honored if the trees were planted with literary pomp and ceremony."

The narrator goes on with the story of that May evening, thus:

"Lowering his voice confidentially and leaning forward over the desk Mr. Durant told his group of listeners that he wished us to inaugurate a Wellesley Tree Day. The boys, he said, planted an ivy just as they were

leaving their Alma Mater. How much better for the Wellesley girls, while still freshmen, to plant a tree, whose growth they could watch, as it watched theirs, all through the four college years, a tree in which, on every future visit, they would recognize a long acquainted friend. We must lose no time about it. He had the arrangements all made. This first year the sophomores and freshmen were to plant their trees on the same afternoon, right before the college, one over against the library, (O scholastic '79) and one over against the dining room, (poor mundane '80).

Mr. Hunnewell had given him two beautiful exotics for us. He would ask the Faculty to grant us a holiday. We were to have ceremonies for the occasion,—music, poems, addresses,—and we must not take more than a week or two to get them ready. Now the Sophomores would better go down into the library and plan their program at once, while the Freshmen stayed in the chapel to plan theirs, and the exercises of both Sophomores and Freshmen must be the best.

So Mr. Durant, following up with a mischievous glance this last paradoxical direction, retired amid a storm of clapping, leaving us somewhat breathless, but aglow with sympathetic energy.

And energy we needed, for as yet we scarcely had existence as individual classes. '79, to be sure, had organized after her own erratic fashion in the preceding year, but she did not frame a constitution, only by-laws, and these—at least it was so rumored in the ranks of '80—she had ignominiously lost. As for the Fresh-

men, they had nothing to lose, but the class grew with a rapidity never emulated by its tree. Before Mr. Durant's early date sped around, committees had been appointed, a constitution drawn up, submitted to the Faculty, reproved, improved, approved, officers chosen, Tree Day parts assigned, prepared, and only one thing forgotten, but that the last which a modern class could forget—costume. In the annals of '80 it stands written:

'Class '80 was engaged in forming, in this instance, a sort of aimless running hither and thither, calling for absent girls, and struggling desperately to make a straight line out of the rest,—when a report reached them that the Sophomores, who were doing the same thing, though, of course, in a different manner, in the room opposite, had a banner with a strange device, and streamers and things. 'Oh dear, and we must meekly walk out behind them with our plain and unpretentious clothes,' sighed they. 'Why didn't we attempt the ornamental? What are brains beside those little caps, and solid worth in comparison with those bewitchingly airy streamers?' Pang number one—this amazing difference in externals. They gathered near the Sophomorical tree, and found out (pang number two) that 79 had printed programs; their own were only Freshman handwriting, possessing no outward beauty. Again they held on to their fluttering hearts, and were only consoled when they perceived that the stylish programs, like Ole Massa's coat, 'wouldn't go half way round.' "

Then it was that the venerated spade made its first appearance. We had confidently expected a trowel,

had written indeed "Apostrophe to the Trowel" on our programs, and our apostrophist, (do not see the dictionary), a girl of about the same height as the spade, but by no means, as she modestly suggested, of the same mental capacity, was so stricken with astonishment when she had mounted the rostrum and this burly instrument was propped up before her, that she nearly forgot her speech. Then it was that the ancient and honorable custom of crowning the day of glory with an ice-cream supper was inaugurated, although the afternoon was raw and chilly and the ground so damp that the Preps were constantly on the run providing shawls for the Faculty's shivering shoulders or rifling the reading-room of newspapers to spread beneath the pedagogical feet. And then it was there was introduced the more questionable practice of planting class trees too delicate to bear the college course. Although a foolish little bird built her nest and laid her eggs in the golden-leaved evergreen of '79, and although a much handsomer nest with a very much larger egg appeared immediately in the Retinospora Precipera Aurea of '80, yet the rival "nymphs with golden hair" were both soon forced to forsake their withered tenements, Mr. Hunnewell's exotics, after another trial or two, being succeeded by plebeian hemlocks.

There has been no break in the succession of Tree Days since those primitive rites of '77. In '78 the three college classes held exercises about their respective trees, and in '79 and '80, the four. But the patience of an audience has its limits, and the Juniors and Sophomores of later date have magnanimously decided to be seen

and not heard on Tree Day, save that the Juniors claim a few moments for the planting of their ivy, and a Sophomore mounts the Freshman rostrum to deliver over the spade.

From 1877 to 1881 the development of the ceremonies showed the beginnings of the present pageant. A writer in one of the earlier Legendas comments on the "lack of costume and processional" of this period, but remarks that there was much singing. In 1879 all four classes took part; in 1880 the Seniors, led by a rare spirit, came to the front as the chief actors in the drama, and since then Tree Day has been chiefly a Senior Day.

Something happened in 1881. Let one who was there tell of the event.

"The class of '82 had a dark red and silver for its color: '83 had blue, I believe. Tree Day was very near when different '82's were seen excitedly whispering in groups. What could have happened? '83 had changed her color to red,—a brighter cherry red to be sure, but on Wellesley's broad campus, who was liable to distinguish shades of red! And yet if the distinction wasn't made, an '82 might be mistaken for an '83!! A dire calamity indeed! '82 called a class meeting at the first available moment and the grave situation was discussed. As a result a secret messenger was despatched to Boston, and all the calico of white back ground with small red figure which Jordan happened to have was purchased. Some turkey red, and some red and silver Japanese fans completed the shopping.

In those days, the housekeeper roomed in the short north corridor over the Main Building dining room,

and at that time, the three connecting recitation rooms in the north second floor center were called C. D. & E. These rooms were then the daily scenes of mathematical and Greek struggles but their walls were now to look down upon struggles of another kind. In our hour of need, Mrs. Torrey's sympathies were easily enlisted; her workroom, containing two sewing machines, should open only to the knock of an 82. While the College family was in the dining room that evening, Jordan's mysterious package was deposited in room C, and the key later handed in secret to an '82. Supper over, the members of the class hastily gathered sewing materials and a few took raincoats as well, and by routes varied and devious, they arrived one by one at the scene of action. Unfortunately, Jordan didn't have as much calico of our pattern as we had hoped, and it was therefore decided with too keen a sense of justice that since each bore an equal proportion of the expense, all must share alike in the division of the material. Tape measures and shears were busily used to accomplish this result. In the meantime, a cutting committee had gradually formed itself; certain members of the class thought they could cut skirts, another one or two were willing to wrestle with the waist problem, while still another felt sure she could cut good looking sleeves for the minimum amount of material. These useful members were located in convenient positions about the rooms and as fast as the portions of cloth were cut off, their owners hastened to them, our tailors, to have their costumes cut. As soon as a skirt left the shears, the '82 who knew how to run Mrs. Torrey's machine donned

her raincoat and with the precious secret carefully concealed, started on her errand. Fortunately for us, the rest of the College family was too busily occupied with other affairs to notice the unusual procession, and thus our work went on unnoticed. While skirts were being stitched, waists and sleeves were basted and fitted—turkey red was torn off for belts, etc. Each had a task—not a moment was to be lost. But alas! consternation brought the work for a moment to a standstill. One of the larger girls was trying on her skirt when it became apparent that her amount of goods, coupled with her size, made her skirt far more in harmony with recent fashions than with those prevailing at that time. What was to be done? Bear it bravely, cheered by the thought that though the costume might not be becoming, its wearer would never be mistaken for an '83. Thus we worked busily on, racing against time, when suddenly the silent time bell rang. Our hearts sank within us, for our costumes were not finished. What could we do on the morrow with only half done dresses!

"Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown," we're told, and if all their sleep is as restless as ours was that night, they must lead a sleepy life. But we are also told that "fortune favors the brave," and apparently, this time we were included in that class, for the next day proved to be so altogether unpleasant that Tree Day was postponed! '82 had difficulty that day in only smiling when the world would consider it proper. We *felt* a smile all day, and eagerly waited for evening when we could again resume our dressmaking labors. Again there was division of labor, and fittings, and bastings, and

hems went busily on and when the silent time bell rang that night, it gave us no such shiver as it did the night before. Not only was each '82 where she was mistress of her situation but we had also made a turkey red banner bearing the inscription in silver paper letters, "Calico versus velvet,"—a sentiment taken from a recent sermon by Mr. Durant.

On the eventful day we were to assemble in Room A. Raincoats were pressed into service, thus all of our costume except the head gear could be concealed. This was arranged after the door had been locked and only the call of the marshal would cause it to open.

In the moments of waiting, we had time to think of what we had done. When we realized we had turned College custom upside down, we hurriedly asked ourselves how it would be received. Ought we to carry our banner after all? Fortunately the time of waiting was not long. We soon heard the call from the corridor, "'82." Instantly, the line formed, the key turned, and "Calico versus Velvet" was in the world for better or for worse. Never can we forget the gasp of the unsuspecting marshal when she caught sight of us. Expecting only a dignified line of black, what was this that she saw? She leaned forward and peered at us, as if to see if this was an apparition; then with another gasp which said, "What shall I do," she proceeded with her duties. But the casual passers in the corridor had taken up her gasp of astonishment, and they in turn passed it on to those about the front door, and then to those in the oval outside. By that time we were fully in sight, and their attention attracted by the un-

usual sound which they had heard, every one was looking straight at us. What shall I call the noise which instantly greeted us? Was it gasp, or moan or groan? Probably it was all three for we weren't pretty to look at. Surely we needed a steady nerve to advance unfalteringly behind our marshal while such an unusual greeting sounded in our ears.

The exercises passed off pleasantly, and barring the demonstration when we appeared, quite in the usual manner. The afternoon was only marred for some of us, by the occasional recurrence of the question of the waiting time. Had we done something terrible? But any uncertainty on that subject was quickly removed when at the close of the exercises the marshal came to escort us to the President, adding as she delivered the message, "Miss Howard wants to congratulate you personally." And congratulate us she certainly did,—was much pleased to know that our costumes had only cost thirty-nine cents, was more pleased to learn that we had made them ourselves, and the greatest pleasure of all was that we had put Mr. Durant's sermon to such practical use. Nor was this all—While talking with our President word had come that Mrs. Durant also wanted to congratulate her class. She expressed similar appreciation of our innovation and capped the climax by telling us that the President had given her permission to invite us to call after supper on Mr. Durant. His health was such that it had not been considered prudent for him to attend the exercises. Going out after supper in those days was a privilege indeed. Add to that the honor of serenading Mr. Durant, and the

great satisfaction of seeing in his wonderfully, expressive face the pleasure he felt, and you can see that '82's cup of happiness was full and overflowing."

The dancing, which now characterizes Tree Day, came soon after '82's innovation. The *Courant* describes the pageant of 1888:

"'89 was a charming bouquet of flower maidens led by Mother Spring. Under her gentle guidance the haughty tulips condescended to the society of the modest lillies of the valley, and the country cousins, apple blossoms, daisies, butter cups and violets. Doctor Phillips Brooks, their honorary member, was among them in the character of Jack in the Pulpit. Sophomore wisdom had transformed '90 to the symbolic owl. A large flock of these weird birds hopped or flew along in the procession, flapping their wings and hooting dismally. The Freshmen were Sea Nymphs in pale green."

Float

Float dates from "the early '80's." There had been crews on the Lake from the beginning, whose boats were described as "queer-looking hulks," but it would have been truer, and kinder, to term them hospitable, comfortable affairs, designed to carry a picturesque group of white gowned, be-ribboned girls, who were chosen for their ability to sing rather than to row, and who honored the distinguished guests of the college, by taking them to ride upon the Lake. "Elizabeth" wrote in May, 1877 to her father: "The boating is the absorbing interest at present and I am becoming very proficient. I can row with two oars at once and can take several fancy strokes. At present I am learning to "feather" my oars nicely without splashing water. There have been some smaller boats put on the lake, and these are much easier for one person to handle than the one you rode in last year when you were here. I am obliged to be very careful not to over-exert myself and am learning to be very prudent, so that when I come home you will be much surprised at my improvement in that respect."

A letter, written in 1884 describes Float thus:

You know our College is built by the very side of the loveliest little lake you ever saw in all the world. It's very irregular in shape, and you can't see it all at once from any one point, so that it has the effect of being much larger than it really is, and when you are

out on it, it keeps opening up new bays and pretty nooks and surprises in the way of tiny pebbled beaches that are just simply fascinating. Then the shores are so lovely; here a bit of meadow, blue with violets, and there a heavily wooded point, while over yonder is a gray cliff with nodding columbine blossoms, or a grassy knoll from which a "lady birch" leans down to look at herself in the water.

Well, we have a lot of boats on the lake, and though we don't go wild over races as those foolish Yale and Harvard boys do, yet we have our class crews and all that, and really get no end of fun out of our boating. It's the proper thing when any distinguished body is visiting the college to take them out on the lake. Once Longfellow came to see us, you know, and we took him out rowing in a boat christened for the occasion—the Evangeline.

But the "float?" Yes, I'm coming to that, my dear; just don't get impatient. "A float" is a sort of a review of the whole fleet of boats. Each boat, from the stately Bon Homme Richard to the graceful Undine and the famous Argo, is scrubbed up to look its very best; the crews are lovely in their varied uniforms; and every little vessel carries two or three favored and delighted guests. At a given hour the fleet sets out from the shore, and after a parade around the lake, racing, singing, meeting, and greeting—each crew having its own peculiar salute for voice and oars—a signal from the Senior boat calls them all together, and a cord, passed from stern to stern and from bow to bow, holds them side by side, while they float gently along with the current towards the

eastern end of the lake, singing, meanwhile, like so many swans—ahem!

But you can imagine how lovely it all was to-night; we were out from six to eight and saw the sun go down in a blaze of glory and the red western sky turn slowly to gold and then to the most fashionable and exquisite grays, as Venus and the lesser lights of Heaven came out one by one and the girls made picturesque groups upon the shore, encouraging by their applause the music which floated out to them over the water.

Of course you'll want to know about the girls' boating suits, especially as you are probably trying just now to think up something perfectly distracting and unique for your own costume this summer. Well, the very prettiest of all, I think, was the crew of the Tanager, Sophomore class. They are made of white flannel, plain skirts with three or four tucks around the bottom, sailor waists, and soft white cloth hats—the hats, cuffs, collars, tie, belt, etc., being edged with a gold cord quite large. The Tanager is painted in white and gold, the pennant is of the same colors, and the cushions are yellow, too, everything matching in the most delightful manner.

The "Bon Homme Richard" is a blue boat, decorated with golden stars, though whatever business stars have on the outside of a boat, I don't know, and the crew wear blue dresses, flat, tasselled caps, a la college fellows, with a knot of blue, with broad gold braid in rows on collars, cuffs, etc.

The "Evangeline" crew had quaint poke bonnets, and the sleeves of their white waists were laced up

with narrow ribbons in two shades of blue. The "Egeria" had the honor of taking out sweet-faced Mrs. Joseph Cook, who is boarding near by us at present, and whom we all like tremendously. The girls who manned the "Brunehild" wore sailor hats of mixed straw with broad red ribbons and their white dresses had red collars and cuffs. The '87's rowed in the "Prydwen," and wore white waists, and hats with red ribbons, and striped red and white skirts.

Our dear Miss Freeman went in the "Undine," the girls wearing white suits and jockey caps (!) decorated with narrow pale green ribbons, very cool and dainty in effect. The Sailor suits were black, embroidered in white and lavender, the class colors, and—let me see—oh! the "Argos!" They are next prettiest, I think, to the Sophomores—white suits and caps with purple and gold ribbons caught up from the buttonhole to the shoulder, and a bunch of pansies on the breast. They have a cute song, too, with a refrain, in which they give "three cheers for our crew and our captain, Miss McQ," for you must know that every boat has one or more songs of its own, and some of them are very bright. It was these they sang as they floated there, with occasionally one which would be started by some one and then gradually taken up by the full chorus with beautiful effect.

Well, it got darker and darker, and we had to come in at last. Landing is great fun as each crew tries to outdo the others in the ease and dignity with which they accomplish it. But said dignity was sometimes marred by unseemly jokes. The bos'n from the Bon Homme

Richard, for instance, lying in wait for the Tanager, the last boat in, demanded in tragic tones, "Have you our sponge?"

"Girls," said the Captain of the Bon Homme Richard, "is the Junior Sponge in our boat? If it is!—put it out!"

From '98's Legenda we gather this rather heartless description of the Floats of earlier years. Beginning with the aforementioned "early 80's," you see the grassy shores of Lake Waban on a warm June evening. Here, a small crowd of women, with a *very* modest sprinkling of men in attendance, are standing about in groups or seated comfortably on the green benches scattered about. (Fancy anyone being "seated comfortably" at Float!)———Out on the Lake, close to the point, jutting out from the West Woods, you can see certain huge hulks which are drifting nearer. The white-robed girls, riding secure in their queer-looking tubs, are resting on their oars and leisurely floating in to shore. Now they begin to sing.———Look well at the Mayflower. She is immense, cumbrous, tublike, so rounded at stern and bow that you cannot judge when she is headed bow to. See the freight she bears. Here are dainty maidens, clad in thin white muslins, with ribbons of festive pink and blue floating from their waists.

Behold, the Mayflower, followed by her sister tubs, now takes on a queer sliding motion, responding to the strokes of the heavy oars wielded by the white robed maidens. What a catching of crabs is here! What sputtering, what effort! At last they succeed in forming a strange clump close off shore. This is the *Star!*"

So much for the pilgrims and the Mayflower. '89's Float "shows a gay procession of girls winding down the hill. They are dressed in brilliant colors, and brandish long oars aloft. Some of these young women are of a dignified and lofty carriage, and wear suits of red and what, for convenience' sake, we shall style ecru. The Senior Class of 1889. Another group in heliotrope and gold follow close in their wake. Here are others in bright green, and last, but not least, come nine squads in blues and reds and whites. These are the Freshmen Crews! Glance at their variegated head gear. Observe a few sailor hats with bands of blue and white. See those bright red Tam O'Shanters of heavy velvet, close by. Of a truth there is spice in variety."

In 1894 a new phenomenon has appeared. It is the "new boats." "Fitted out, to be sure, with double seats, but showing marked signs of developed elongation. The '94 crew has appropriated one of these unto itself, and, as some one puts it, is floating by 'on the half shell.' '92 and '93 are conspicuous for jaunty suits, the one in clover pink and white, the other in stiff ducks with gold trimmings. But look with care at '95! See the brawn of their muscles, the strength of their backs. *First crew on the Lake chosen on the athletic basis.*"

And now comes the Float of '98! "Fireworks light up the whole scene. Boats adorned with lanterns are floating about. The Hunnewell gondola, with its picturesque gondolier and sombre coloring, lends a special dignity to the scene. In a light cedar boat a certain vivacious person in black and white is being rowed about, amid the various canoes, darting hither

and thither. She gives a signal, and from the boat house (then situated in College Hall Cove), a long, slender shell shoots out. The people seem pleased as '96 pulls, away up the lake, showing off a most excellent stroke. '97 also receives generous applause as she makes her appearance. Her boat bears upon its stern an ambiguous I. O. U., and is somewhat stained by reason of a certain champagne bath administered in mysterious fashion, on a summer evening, shortly before tea."

Soon '98's boat appears, "unequaled by any on the Lake," according to their Legenda, which ought to know.

But here is '99! They are clad in "gym suits of sober blue." Surely the days of romance are dead. And the picture closes with a vision of "a long shell filled with stalwart girls," in white sweaters and true 'new woman' bloomers. It is the Varsity Crew of Wellesley College.

What would '98, whose boat you will remember, "was unequalled by any on the Lake," have said, had she heard a certain freshman class, only three years later, declare that the old shells were "tubs" (like the Mayflower, '98) and decide to buy a real shell from the Harvard boat builder!

May Day

"May Day stands as one of the mile posts of the year; for the undergraduates all sorts of fun and new responsibility, for the Seniors, the beginning of the end."

The origin of the statue celebrations seems lost in mystery. Perhaps Harriet Martineau began it, and conspired with the Reading Girl, (who never indulged in "light literature") and the Backwoodsman. The secret of their yearly frivolity, their sudden assumption of new personalities, new clothes, and their subtle, silent comments on the passing college generation are hidden with them.

Hoop-rolling began with 1895. That class started Senior Hoop Rolling and all of May Day Frolic. One of their number writes:

"As Seniors we thought everyone seemed too serious, and the Wellesley tendency was to take ones-self too seriously. '95 was always trying to put some "pep" into things and tried to find the humor in every situation. Of course we were abominably gay and frivolous, and student government would have been irksome to us.

Some time in April we decided to cut loose on May Day. We procured hoops from Boston. We electrified the College by rolling hoops, in our Caps & Gowns, from our Cottages, Freeman, Stone Hall, etc., up to College Hall, and around and around the circle until Chapel time.

We left our hoops outside College Hall and everywhere we went that day the hoop was sure to go,—back and forth from recitations, library, etc. We became very expert before the day was over.

That afternoon we dressed up in children's dresses or shortened our own skirts and played games on the hill in front of the cottages. We play Round the Carpet, Drop the Handkerchief, Hide and Seek, London Bridge is Falling, to our heart's content. Never was there a happier day, a more radiantly satisfactory day than that first real English May Day at Wellesley when we all slipped off ten years and were merry children."

Barnswallows

The 1906 Legenda gives this history of the migrations of Wellesley Barnswallows.

"The Barn Swallow Society plays so prominent a part in our college life that we rarely think of it as a comparatively recent organization. Until 1895 students at Wellesley had to be content with presenting their frolics in the gymnasium, a room inadequate in size, too closely connected with the main building, and altogether unsatisfactory. The general dissatisfaction with this place of entertainment led to the desire on the part of the students for a building to be devoted entirely to social pastimes. In the late spring of 1895, May Pitkin conceived the idea of an organization which should be the center of the social life and unify the entire college in the realm of play. The scheme came too late for Miss Pitkin to accomplish much, but she left the idea with Julia Lyman, '96. Miss Lyman consulted with Louise McNair, '96, who immediately became interested and began to shape the plan. At the March meeting of the Society Presidents she presented the idea and secured the cooperation of everyone present. The presidents at once laid the plans before their respective societies, enlisting their hearty interest and immediate enthusiasm. In May Miss McNair presided as chairman over a meeting of about thirty seniors and juniors called together to discuss the question of the proposed organization. It was decided to draw up a constitution and

present it to the student body at a mass meeting. Mary Haskell secured the constitution of the Radcliffe "Idlers," and upon this the Barn Swallows constitution was based. Members of the Faculty, upon being consulted, gave their approval and promised their aid.

The death of the college cows about this time left the barn conveniently unused. In the warm days of the spring of '96 the girls had played there, but the place was unattractively titled "Recreation Hall." At the suggestion of Miss Roberts this pompous name was dropped in favor of the "Barn," and the embryo society was called the "Barnswallows". At a mass meeting early in June the name and constitution were adopted and a committee appointed to nominate the candidates for the presidency and the other offices. On June 17, in College Hall Chapel, Mary Haskell was elected first president of the Barnswallows.

The new president strove diligently to make the infant organization a real power in the college life. By the end of June two hundred girls had signed the constitution. So great was the enthusiasm that many of the outgoing seniors joined the association in order to be charter members. The wise management of Miss Haskell gave the club so sure a direction that it soon became indispensable as a social factor.

The first business which is recorded in the records is a petition sent to the Trustees, October 4, 1896, that the old barn be heated. The plea brought no response until May 11, 1897, when at a meeting held in College Hall Chapel, it was reported that "the Trustees have

obtained $1,200 for fitting up the barn, sheathing and sealing, erecting the stage, and putting in the footlights." This step meant practically the abandonment of the gymnasium and the installation of the Barnswallows in its permanent home."

Forensic Burning

Again 1906 and her Legenda are the source of valuable information, and gives this account of Forensic Burning.

"When '89 drowned her Senior Philosophy Theses in the Lake, the question of forensic burning really began. For some reason they were not permitted to resort to fire, so sought the waters of Waban as the Lethe of their troubles. One Sophomore class was so distraught by having mathematics required of them that they burned their text books. 'Ninety-four had a combination forensic and debate course required of them Junior year and at the end of it, in wrath publicly burned their forensics in the west woods; '95 buried theirs on Tree Day, '96 made doubly sure by doing both, and '97 composed and sang the dirge which is secretly and solemnly handed down to us. Forensic burning grows even more shrouded in mystery. It would never do here to violate the secrecy of the rites performed in the twilight shadows of some hidden spot in the woods. Even Sophomores, when they are keen enough to discover that all their Junior friends are leaving the campus, innocently enough—by trolley, carriage and afoot,

hurriedly and leisurely, to the four points of the compass, when they chance upon the chosen rendezvous, stand outside and molest not the Junior sentries, listen to the blood-curdling groans issuing from the depths of the woods, and wonder how their forensic shall be kept a secret. But the procession across the campus is for everyone to see, and the Latin dirge for everyone to hear, if not to understand. The long serpentine of white cowled, sheet draped figures with their flickering candles winds slowly across the campus and disappears among the trees on the hill. College Hall echoes with mournful notes of the dirge, the silent figures glide away again and suddenly are gone. Nineteen-six appeared in chapel white haired and in mourning, the day the last forensics went in, and with due solemnity performed the rites celebrating the end of their labors, and the end of required forensic and debate courses."

The Introduction of Student Self-Government

The original government of the student body at Wellesley was parental. We recall how, even well into the 90's, a member of the faculty would halt a wanderer who had strayed into the corridor after ten o'clock at night, or would rap at the door of a room whence undue noise had issued; how students were required to obtain permission from the head of the house before they left town; how transoms were occasionally blanketed. Though we perhaps smile as we look back upon the restrictions of the early days, we must yet think of them with respect; for the very founding of a woman's college in 1875 was a liberal, even a radical, move.

Toward the end of the 90's, the College showed itself more and more reluctant to enforce some of its rules, particularly those relating to quiet and the extinguishing of lights at ten o'clock. The times were demanding greater freedom for the students; espionage and guard duty were indeed becoming more irksome to the members of the faculty residing in College houses. Anticipating the day of an established student government, certain faculty members encouraged the election in a few campus houses of student proctors and heads of houses, who were to execute the existing regulations. Since the old rules had not emanated from the student body, this regime could not be called student government, but it was the first step in that direction.

During the college year of 1900-01, a student movement brought before the college the question of introducing a form of actual student self-government. Education upon the subject was necessary, for the idea was new to very many undergraduates. At first, small groups of students discussed the proposition. The president of the student government associations in Vassar and Bryn Mawr, and the president of the Council at Smith, explained the work and scope of their organizations. Finally, after mass meetings had debated the question, the students voted to petition the trustees for the right of self-government. They sent with the petition a proposed constitution and set of by-laws, which a joint committee of faculty members appointed by the faculty and students elected by the students had drawn up.

The trustees granted the petition; and on March 6, 1901, at an impressive morning ceremony in Houghton Chapel, representatives from the faculty and the students signed the agreement which committed Wellesley to the principle of self-government.

Mary A. Leavens, 1901